



ACADEMIC PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATION

June 2, 2020

Dear APA Community,

There are no adequate words to describe the events unfolding in our country. “Difficult”, “challenging”, and “tragic” don’t cut it. Yet these events are, at the same time, all too familiar.

We are all aware that the Black and African American community is disproportionately affected by illness, lack of health care access, pregnancy mortality, and more. The COVID-19 pandemic has been no different, as the Black and African American community members are again at higher risk of dying than many others in the United States. We often forget, however, that they are also at higher risk of dying while simply walking down the street, sitting in their homes, jogging in their communities, and enjoying public spaces. They are at higher risk of dying all the time.

George Floyd’s killing last week, along with the recent killing of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, has again drawn attention to racial profiling and excessive use of force by segments of our own governments. Racism and anti-Black bigotry is pervasive in society and misguides interactions between private citizens like the widely-viewed recent example where Amy Cooper called the police on Christian Cooper, a Black man birdwatching in Central Park (and lied that he was threatening her). We can go on listing the names of victims we know all too well, but that is surely dwarfed by the names we will never know—names of the victims whose assaults were not recorded on video, phones, or audio as “proof” of the injustice they suffered.

The violence, killing, and profiling we are witnessing are not new, they are not a coincidence, and they are not accidents. Let us be clear. They are the result of hundreds of years of systematic and institutionalized racism. Many will seek to use the riots to discredit the protests. Doing so would be a terrible mistake. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best in his 1967 speech, “The Other America”:

I think America must see that riots do not develop out of thin air. Certain conditions continue to exist in our society which must be condemned as vigorously as we condemn riots. But in the final analysis, a riot is the language of the unheard. And what is it that America has failed to hear? It has failed to hear that the plight of the Negro poor has worsened over the last few years. It has failed to hear that the promises of freedom and justice have not been met. And it has failed to hear that large segments of white society are more concerned about tranquility and

the status quo than about justice, equality, and humanity. And so in a real sense our nation's summers of riots are caused by our nation's winters of delay. And as long as America postpones justice, we stand in the position of having these recurrences of violence and riots over and over again. Social justice and progress are the absolute guarantors of riot prevention.

We can draft statements of solidarity, diversity, and inclusion, and stand strong in support of one another, but it is not enough. These statements become overwhelming and triggering over time when there are no changes.

The time for action is now. The time has always been now, whether it is was 400 years ago, 160 years ago, 53 years ago, 4 years ago, or last week. Let us take the time as an organization to recognize the terror our Black and African American community must endure daily and encourage ourselves and others to increase our institutional understanding and awareness to collectively make a difference.

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."
-Desmond Tutu

Resources for Engaging in Anti-Racism and Practicing Solidarity

- [Resources for Engaging in Anti-Racism Work](#)
- [We are Living in a Racist Pandemic](#)
- [Your Black Colleagues May Look Like They're Okay - Chances are They're Not](#)
- [Affirming Black Lives Without Inducing Trauma](#)

Resources for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) to Engage in Self-Care

- [Surviving & Resisting Hate: A Toolkit for People of Color](#)
- [Self-Care Tips for Black People Who Are Struggling with this Very Painful Week](#)
- [Self-Care for People of Color after Psychological Trauma](#)

Resources for Pediatric Providers

- [The Impact of Racism on Child and Adolescent Health](#)
- [Talking to Children About Racial Bias](#)
- [Helping Families Navigate Race Issues Should Be an Ongoing Conversation](#)
- [Pediatricians Called to Address Racism to Achieve Health Equity](#)

Ways to Support Current Developments in Minneapolis

- [Black Visions Minneapolis, MN](#)
- [Minnesota Freedom Fund](#)
- [Reclaim the Block](#)